PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

Note to Pharmacists: New Processes for Accessing Pharmacare Information

As you know, Pharmacare and other health programs are undertaking service efficiencies and staff changes to support a 45 per cent reduction in administrative costs over the next three years.

The Pharmacare program has already taken steps to meet this target by:

- reassigning and reducing staff levels;
- redirecting funds formerly devoted to infrequently used toll-free telephone lines;
- mailing remittance advices only when payment adjustments have been made; and,
- allowing individuals with diabetes to access Pharmacare benefits without the re-certification that was formerly required.

In the near future, Pharmacare will also take increased advantage of Web technologies for the distribution of the *Pharmacare Newsletter*, ending the expensive mailing process. To support this change, staff will soon establish a publication schedule and notify pharmacies by e-mail when newsletters are posted to the Web. With electronic publication, pharmacy staff and other interested parties can view the newsletter online or, if more convenient, print it directly from the Web.

Each of the above and future changes will affect how pharmacies and the public access Pharmacare program information and services. As government reduces administrative costs and moves to self-service models for information access and distribution, Pharmacare HelpDesk service representatives, pharmacy consultants, clerical and administrative support staff continue to be available for problem resolution or PharmaNet connection disruptions; however, Pharmacare staff are no longer available to provide routine information about plans and programs.

Please access routine information about Pharmacare through the following sources:

- **Pharmacare Information Line:** Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, Pharmacare's interactive voice response system provides information on prescriber IDs, the status of Special Authorities, the benefit status of drugs, the plans under which specific drugs are covered, and the status of Blood Glucose Monitoring Certificates. In the future, when contacted for information readily available on the Pharmacare Information Line, staff may transfer your call to the interactive voice response system.
- **PharmaNet responses**: Whenever you submit a claim on PharmaNet, the response includes information regarding the patient's plan, the status of any relevant Special Authorities, the maximum drug cost accepted by Pharmacare, the patient's accumulation towards the deductible prior to the claim, the benefit status of the drug, etc.
- **Pharmacare Web site**: Pharmacare's Web site (www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/pharme) provides a wealth of general information on Pharmacare plans, programs, benefits and Special Authorities.

Please use the sources of information detailed above whenever possible. Doing so will decrease wait times for urgent enquiries and allow Pharmacare staff to continue to deliver prompt and effective response on matters more crucial to pharmacy business and client service.